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Bard

SUPERMAN SONNET

A real traveler turns everything into the road.
This Superman movie shows a way of thinking
that makes helping a lot of people more important
than making love to one of them. It takes a while
for a man (or superman) to figure that out.
But when he does, the universe becomes a road
of rescue and assistance and instruction,
like a school on wheels careening down the highway
full of good music and the exact information,
the stuff you need. Because you're watching,
and everything you see is full of (or you make it
full) of meaning, and it becomes your street.
Saunter. It will become you. Infinitely.
A real road turns everything into the goal.

27 May 1995

A NEW THEOLOGY

Cautiously design a gesture for Medea.
Then when she's gone dragoning to other parts
discern a mythic heroine nearer to our needs,

built on love and helping and getting her own way—
a new Goddess, sexual, intact, apart,
and needing nothing of us. Television brings her.

All the images piped into our houses and our heads
are the new Gods. They give themselves
abundantly to us, they enter us and live

in us as guides and surgeons and good company.
The forms and faces of these Powers
charged with more than human light

are made of colors alone. They lead us through the grey
of our uninteresting condition. Let us pray
they have a blessing to impart to us,

a lineage or wave of generous benevolence
that laps over us. It is not while we watch
that we worship. Our liturgy comes later

when they exist, intact and beautiful,
inside our heads and we try to go our way
with them, almost disguised as them, to meet our day.

27 May 1995

The orbit of the thing is huge
and takes it twice a lifetime
into the last acre of your local mind

where you can see it, a whim
of ice on the horizon or plume
of breath before your face

when you're not breathing.
Everything comes from that.
It is like the smell that comes

one cool evening after lilacs.
And before the roses.
In the old days they called it

It goes by but now they say *The Passage*.

28 May 1995

CAILLOUX

Pebbles? Each flung's
a boulder in the air.

That stays there.

Alchemy
builds churches our of this.

Inside, only the bishop sits.

29 May 1995
KTC

THESE ROBES

He called the earth
to witness
His Enlightenment,

His bornless certainty.
We wear
by His privilege

robes made of such
colors as the stuff He touched,

mud and dirt, red
sand of Rajasthan, red
clay of Pennsylvania.

29 May 1995
KTC

Not caring but yearning is what makes books old.
There is nothing more exhausting than what is not.

And so the elegant fans of the hosta leaves
spread in morning shadow strictly local

like a fresh egg warm from the hen. Shells
have to harden to be an actual day.

30 May 1995

RHODOdendrons
in full
glorious bloom

and one clematis
beneath your window
like a bishop in disgrace

yet planning
further escapades—
theology of pure color!

Each rhodo flower a
concentric campfire of
angels blaring mauve trumpets

out. Thinglessness
of angels! We see
everything else.

30 May 1995

A GAZELLE FOR ROBIN BLASER

It's not that they are years they are the only things
In a world of shadows I mean the pulse of time we move

From the beginning there have been lilacs bent over the fence
The street is the opposite of the house so song has to be

The song has to live under lilacs and among the dying
What is said in the bedroom must make sense in the street

From the very beginning the man I'm thinking about was thinking
He thought there are stairs in the old poems that reach the subway

He understood a school of verse rescues the young from forgetting
Articulate the discipline of nomenclature stick your tongue in a rose

Bees swarm over the library the sound of the ocean is permission
Permission the hush of water on the Malibu sands I abandon forever

Cigarettes smoke themselves the stars are certainly shining
He remembers everything and everything is part of his body

The most important body a person has is what a person does
The self-consistent arguments of ancient lovesongs alarm us

Weather is here to be dealt with and the clock is neurotic
He held death in his arms in the elevator and heard his last words

He made sense of everything until there was nothing left over
From one country to another the intelligence uncoils out loud

From the beginning all levels of the building opened on the same sky
The man was not prepared to let any old lucidity to be lost

The new was nice to him and only the borderguards were mean

Only the police have precincts the mind is a deer and the forest goes.

This is an birthday offering for Robin Blaser, who from first to last has been an elegant wedding guest at the Marriage of Mercury with Philologia, and with all his grace and accuracy has never tolerated eloquence except as thought formed itself into music. As far as I can tell, he noticed everything there is.

30 May 1995
sent via e-mail to Kevin Killian

The things that happen are us.

Frequencies to receive
otherworldly broadcasts
in five colors:

read
wise
grin
mellow
true

And night hears you. Night hears it
for you while you sleep,
you wake up thinking of your father's hat
and you are crying,

the city you thought you'd never leave
is scores of leagues away. And it's still dark.
Waking up is not the same as sunrise.
A woman's nearby, her fingers smell of milk,

so much listening to the dark.

30 May 1995

It is only when the difficult resumes its weeds
that what we think with takes hold of what we think

when children play the earth game and old squirrels
swoon from tree to tree, nothing happens.

You are sunshine. You are shade. The train
comes in, goes out, the kind mother who bore you

is five years dead. Swans continue visiting the little brook.
How terribly easy after all it is to survive.

31 May 1995

Is it now yet?
Is this what I am saying
(writing) with such solemn fuss?

Common to the paper match on fire and the midday sun
is some element — in that one sense
fire is kind and shows itself

so we can name it. What is it
that never comes and never
burns our fingertips

but is always there? What is it that knows us?

31 May 1995